

Come as you are...

Energized

Feeling pumped and ready to dive in after yesterday's sessions

Surviving

Feeling a bit overwhelmed with ideas

Held Together by Coffee

Here because you feel professionally obligated

However you arrive today, you are welcome. Your feelings are valid. And thank you for showing up.



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Small Shifts

Big Impact

with Jillian Thibeau Langille
Accessible Teaching Specialist
NSCC's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

How participation works today

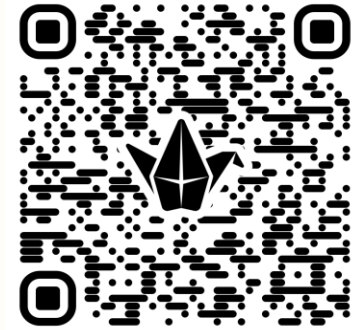
Full on, out loud – hands up, Mentis

Take note and reflect

Talk it out quietly with a partner

Just absorb

All of that is welcome



*Every brain in this room
has different capacities
today — that mirrors
your classrooms.*

Why this topic matters

- Every student's brain processes, regulates, and engages differently
- Optimal learning conditions are those where students can learn with dignity, safety, and less friction
- Small, intentional changes can have the biggest impact, without adding unnecessary complexity or huge time commitment on your part



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Neuro-affirming teaching is not about becoming a perfect teacher. It is about truly respecting and honouring the diversity of brains by building environments where all students feel safe, respected, and able to learn.

Treat This as a Menu

- — These practices are options, not requirements.

Look at Where Students Struggle

Identify the friction points in your classroom. Where do students disengage, fall behind, or seem lost?

Pick What Works for You and Them

Choose strategies that feel realistic. Small changes, consistently applied, make the biggest difference.



Shift 1:

**Use shorter chunks of
teaching and processing**

Pause and reflect

Use shorter chunks of teaching and processing

Practical Strategies

- Teach in shorter segments with pauses for summarizing, asking questions or applying knowledge
- Build multiple cycles of this into every lecture
- Intentionally check for understanding before moving on

ACTIVITY

Partner Talk / Self Reflection



What are some quick but effective knowledge check methods you currently use in your classroom? Can you easily implement these more often?

2-3 minutes • Option to pass



Shift 2:

Expand what listening and participation can look like

Pause and reflect

Expand what listening and participation can look like

Practical Strategies

- Normalize quiet fidgeting and movement within agreed boundaries
- Eye contact is not required for engagement
- Welcome non-speaking forms of participation (ex: hands up if you think...; white boards)
- Offer anonymous response options (Mentis, Teams polls, Padlet, parking lot, question box)

ACTIVITY

Partner Talk / Self Reflection



What are the participation behaviours you were taught to value, and which ones might be worth rethinking?

2-3 minutes • Option to pass



Shift 3:

**Honour intentional breaks as
important parts of learning**

Pause and reflect

Honour intentional breaks as important parts of learning

Practical Strategies

- Build in pause-and-share moments throughout lectures
- Use think-pair-share to process complex content
- Invite delayed responses: "Here are the questions I will ask you tomorrow"
- Make room for short regulation breaks without stigma

ACTIVITY

Movement reset (break)

Stand up. Stretch. Shift position. Grab a coffee refill.
Then notice: did even a small reset change your attention?



Visit the Parking Lot





Shift 4:

Move from creating for students
to co-creating with students

Pause and reflect

Move from creating for students to co-creating with students

Practical Strategies

- Co-create class expectations with students at the start of term
- Ask students what formats or supports help them engage
- Co-create assignment options that work for students and honour your needs too
- Use exemplars to discuss what quality looks like together

ACTIVITY

Partner Talk / Self Reflection



What are some examples of things that typically take a lot of your prep time – can they be co-created in a meaningful way?

2-3 minutes • Option to pass



Shift 5:

Model organization

Pause and reflect

Model organization

Practical Strategies

- Create checklists so students learn to build their own (and then expect them to do so!)
- Help students discover scheduling tools and share what works for them
- Keep deadlines and updates in one consistent, visible place
- Coordinate communication methods across your program as a faculty team

ACTIVITY

Partner Talk / Self Reflection



How do you already do this?
What feels challenging about modeling organization?
What/who can help you through the challenges?

2-3 minutes • Option to pass



Shift 6:

**Make communication
explicit and multi-modal**

Pause and reflect

Make communication explicit and multi-modal

Practical Strategies

- Pair verbal instructions with visual or written supports
- Record or summarize assignment directions in multiple formats (video, bulleted list/checklist)
- Use plain language and explain “why”
- Make important information easy to locate and revisit

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Help is here!

CTL Faculty Team on Campuses

Accessible Teaching Team
Shana & Jillian

Continue the Conversation

**Check question
boxes
Check parking lot**



The floor is yours

Share your questions, examples, and strategies from your own practice. What resonated? What do you want to explore further?



Thank You

Students don't all learn, regulate, or show engagement in the same way — and that's okay.

Small changes can make a meaningful difference.

Leave with one idea to try, one assumption to rethink, and one reminder that every brain is different.